



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 31, 2019

New Jersey Governor Promises to Legalize Suicide for Terminally Ill

The New Jersey State Legislature has passed a controversial assisted-suicide bill that Democrat governor Phil Murphy has promised to sign into law. The bill would allow patients diagnosed with a terminal illness to end their lives via lethal drugs.

The New Jersey Assembly approved S.1072, the "[Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act](#)," by a 41-33 vote on March 25, followed by a 21-16 passage in the State Senate later the same day.



Under the legislation, the state would allow "qualified" terminally ill patients "to obtain medication that the patient may choose to self-administer in order to bring about the patient's humane and dignified death."

According to the language in the bill, the law is limited to adults who are in the "terminal stage of an irreversibly fatal illness, disease, or condition with a prognosis, based upon reasonable medical certainty, of a life expectancy of six months or less."

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The bill specifies "safeguards" supposedly meant to protect the patient, including the required opinion of a second physician, along with the determination by a psychiatrist or psychologist that the patient is mentally capable of choosing to die by suicide. Finally, the suicide comes via a series of self-administered pills the patient can take at home or wherever he decides to die.

Following passage of the bill, Governor Murphy indicated that he would sign it into law, declaring that "allowing terminally ill and dying residents the dignity to make end-of-life decisions according to their own consciences is the right thing to do."

Democrat State Senator Nicholas Scutari, one of the bill's sponsors, applauded its passage, insisting that "there is no good reason for [terminally ill patients] to be forced to prolong their pain and suffering or to prolong the grief of their loved ones if they make that choice."

Among those opposed to the measure was the New Jersey Catholic Conference, who noted the temptation that exists for insurance companies to deny healthcare coverage to terminally ill patients, while offering them inexpensive drugs to end their lives.

Said the group in a statement: "In an era of cost control and managed care, patients with lingering illnesses may be branded as a financial liability for the insurance company, and decisions to encourage death could be driven by reducing costs."

Also opposing the measure was the Patients Rights Action Fund, whose executive director, Matt Valliere, challenged that "New Jersey ought to be investing in better care and support at the end of life, not enshrining this dangerous public policy into law."



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Currently, California, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, Hawaii, Montana, and the District of Columbia allow physician assisted suicide, with another 19 states considering such legislation.

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